



## **QRIS Frequently Asked Questions**

- **Why is the QRIS system changing?**
  - The federal government requires that each state examine their Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) through a lens of continuous improvement. This means states are always challenging themselves to develop tools not only to improve quality, but also to make lasting impacts.
  - While the existing system did make quality impacts that were beneficial for participating programs, the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) saw an opportunity to create a system that would appeal to more programs, and thereby increase participation to expand quality care and early education for more children and families. The mandate for continuous improvement challenges states to step outside their comfort zone and examine current practices to determine where opportunities for growth can be found. We are looking closely at the existing QRIS system and gathering feedback from the field to raise quality, accessibility, and support for early childcare and education programs in the state of Alabama.
  - All initially licensed providers in good standing will be offered an opportunity to enroll as a participant in the QRIS Program during this fiscal year.
  
- **Who is implementing the new QRIS system?**
  - DHR receives federal funding to implement the QRIS system in Alabama. The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE) has been selected by DHR to administer the QRIS system in Alabama through an interagency agreement.
  
- **How is the new system being developed?**
  - The new QRIS system is being developed with consideration from public survey responses from rated and unrated STAR programs. An advisory council has been created with prominent stake holders in private childcare, family childcare, Head Start, higher education, advocacy groups, and community leaders. Input from other states regarding the progress of their own QRIS system, as well as ideas from state and national voices will offer a broader perspective.
  
- **What if my STAR Rating is up for annual review or renewal?**
  - All current STAR ratings will be recognized. When the new system rolls out, there will be extensive support to transition successfully to the new system.
  
- **Will our program keep our current STAR rating?**
  - All current ratings will be recognized. DHR is examining different criteria for quality, and this may mean that your STAR rating will change depending on the new standards that are adopted. When the new system rolls out there will be extensive support available to early care and education programs so there will be no surprises for those currently enrolled.



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- **Will the new system still be a “STAR” rating?**
  - Yes. QRIS not only determines a standard of quality, but also serves as a system of information for families when selecting childcare and family childcare. There will be a statewide education campaign conducted to ensure all stakeholders are aware of what it means to be STAR rated. The campaign will address the many benefits of the “STAR” as it is utilized in the majority of other states with active QRIS programs.
  
- **What if my program was in the process of preparing for a STAR rating according to the prior system?**
  - If your program was in the process of gathering information for a STAR rating, put all activity on pause until the new system is released.
  
- **How do we apply to the new system?**
  - This is a period of transition. The goal is to start a pilot program late summer 2021. All programs in the current QRIS system will be notified with pilot information and QRIS application information. The Alabama Quality Stars website will have updates as new information is released.
  
- **Who do I contact with questions?**
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